Recognizing and accepting Human Behaviour can help us to do a better job

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Niels Malotaux

- Independent Engineering and Team Coach

- Expert in helping teams and organizations to quickly become
  - More effective   -   doing the right things better
  - More efficient   -   doing the right things better in less time
  - More predictable   -   delivering as needed

- Getting projects back on track (project rescue)

- Embedded Systems architect (electronics/firmware)

- Project types
  electronics, firmware, software, space, road, rail, telecom, industrial control, parking system

  It's all about human behaviour !

Ultimate Goal of a What We Do (for our salary)

Quality on Time

- Delivering the Right Result at the Right Time,
  wasting as little time as possible (= efficiently)

- Providing the customer with
  - what they need
  - at the time they need it
  - to be satisfied
  - to be more successful than they were without it
- Constrained by (win - win)
  - what the customer can afford
  - what we mutually beneficially and satisfactorily can deliver
  - in a reasonable period of time

Tom Gilb

(Evo)

- **Plan-Do-Check-Act**
  - The powerful ingredient for success
- **Business Case**
  - *Why* we are going to improve *what*
- **Requirements Engineering**
  - *What* we are going to improve and *what not*
  - How much to improve: *quantification*
- **Architecture and Design**
  - Selecting the *optimum compromise* for *the conflicting requirements*
- **Early Review & Inspection**
  - Measuring quality while doing, learning to prevent doing the wrong things
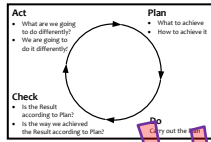
- **Weekly TaskCycle**
  - Short term planning
  - Optimizing estimation
  - Promising what we can achieve
  - Living up to our promises
- **Bi-weekly DeliveryCycle**
  - Optimizing the requirements and checking the assumptions
  - Soliciting feedback by delivering Real Results to *eagerly waiting Stakeholders*
- **TimeLine**
  - Getting and keeping control of Time: Predicting the future
  - Feeding program/portfolio/resource management

Act
- What are we going to do differently?
- We are going to do it differently?

Plan
- What to achieve
- How to achieve it

Check
- Is the Result according to Plan?
- Is the way we achieved the Result according to Plan?

Do
- Carry out the ...

Why

What
How much
Are we done

How

Check and learn as early as possible

Zero Defects Attitude

Evo Planning - Niels

Efficiency of what we do

Effectiveness of what we do

What will happen, and → what will we do about it ? ←

Right Result

Quality On Time

Right Time

Human Behaviour

- Systems are conceived, designed, implemented, maintained, used, and tolerated (or not) by people

- People react quite predictably. However, often differently from what we intuitively think

- Often, we
  - ignore human behaviour
  - incorrectly assume behaviour
  - or decide how people should behave (ha ha)

- To be successful, shouldn't we study and adapt to real behaviour rather than assumed behaviour

- Even if we don't agree with that behaviour
  They shouldn't behave like that !
  Well if they do, they do. They're only human

Movie: Six Days, Seven Nights

How people should behave ?

- Completely new redesigned parking system

- Can you be our QA manager to watch and advise us invited and uninvited

- R&D boss at 'demo':
  > May I do something ?

- Please fill in your credit card number …

  > Crash !

- 20% of the software is there to make the computer do what it should do
- *80% of the software is there to make the computer not do what it should not do*

User behaviour

- We're so deformed,
  we don't anymore know what normal people find normal

- The user is always right … even if they're not

(of course it always depends …)

Sprint demo ??

- Give the delivery to the stakeholders

- Zip your mouth

- Keep your hands handcuffed on your back

- and o-b-s-e-r-v-e what happens

- Seeing what the stakeholders *actually* do provides real feedback

- Then we can 'talk business' with the stakeholders

Assumptions

Better assume that some of our assumptions are wrong. Check!

Assumptions: It can't be done, *they* don't allow it

- Case: Did you ever observe users of your software ?
  - The sales manager said he can make arrangements

- They're in another country !

- Yes, did you ever go there ?

- The boss won't allow us to travel that far

- Did you ask ?

- Don't assume … Check !

It can't be done,
they don't allow it

- Case: procurement manager:

   I should travel to China with an engineer, to discuss the plastic casing
   with our supplier, but the boss never would let us go there

- Did you ask ?

- I went to the boss:
  - Shouldn't they travel to China, to discuss the details of the new casing ?
- Boss: Of course they should !

- Procurement manager after returning from China:
  - Discussing on site saved us many engineering iterations !

Discipline

- Control of wrong inclinations

- Even if we know how it should be done ...
  (if nobody is watching ...)

- Discipline is difficult

- Romans 7:19
  - The good that I want to do, I do not ...

Things we can do:

→ Helping each other (watching over the shoulder)

→ Rapid success (do it 3 weeks for me...)

→ Allowing mistakes (provides short window of opportunity)

Intuition

- Quick and ready insight

- How we automatically react on a situation

- Intuition is fed by experience (before birth it's instinct)

- It is free, we always carry it with us

- We cannot even turn it off

- Sometimes intuition shows us the wrong direction

- Coaching is about *redirecting* intuition

- *Sleeping on it* may help us to make better decisions

Is user intuition wrong, or is the design wrong ?

Sleeping pills

Activation pills

Communication

- Traffic accident: witnesses tell *their* truth

- Same words, different concepts

- Human brains contain rather fuzzy concepts

- Try to explain to a colleague

- Writing it down is explaining it to paper

- If it's written it can be discussed and changed

- Where are the pictures ?

- Vocal communication evaporates immediately

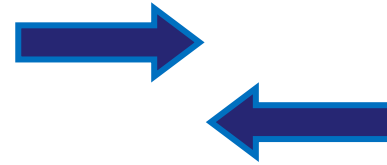- E-mail communication evaporates almost immediately
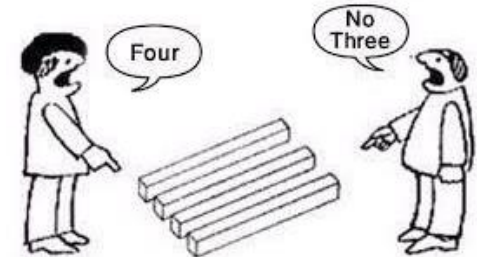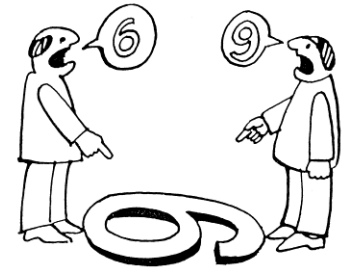
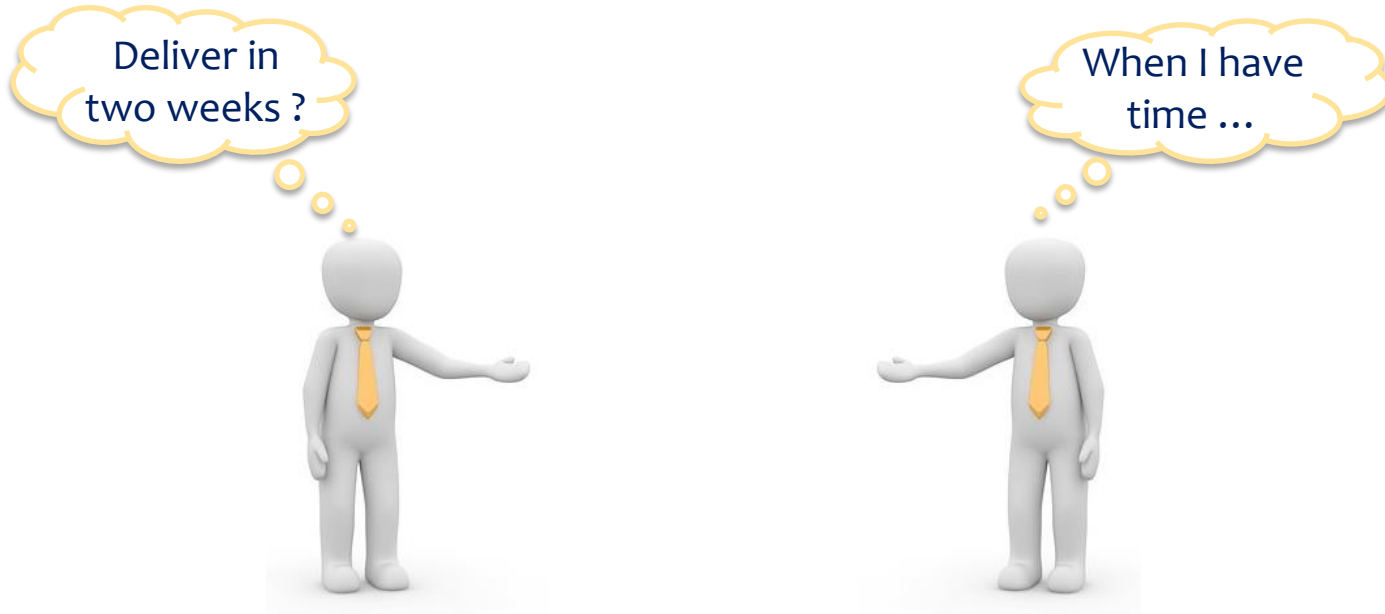# Communication

- Talking as near as possible past each other

To each other   Past each other

- Don't assume we understand: check !

Case: Agreement ?

- Mantra: "Better assume our assumptions are wrong"
  - ~~Deliver in two weeks ?~~
  - Which date !

Now imagine your team (developers, testers, colleagues …)

Perception

- Quick, acute, and intuitive cognition (www.M-W.com)

- Intuitive understanding and insight (www.oxforddictionaries.com)

- What we *think* we understand

- What people say and what they do is not always the same

- Hidden emotions are often the drivers of behaviour

- The head knows, but the heart decides

- "Customers who said they wanted lots of different ice cream flavours from which to choose, still tended to buy those that were fundamentally vanilla"

- Trying to find out what the real value to the customer is, can show many paradoxes

- Don't believe what (you think) they say: check!

Excuses, excuses, excuses …

- We have been thoroughly trained to make excuses

- We always downplay our failures

- It's always 'them' - How about 'us' ?

- At a Fatal Day, any excuse is in vain: we failed

- Even if we "really couldn't do anything about it"

- Mantra: Every day we see a problem earlier, we have a day more to do something about it

- Mantra: What are we going to do about it ?

- Failure is a very hard word. That's why we are using it !
  No pain, no gain

- We never say: "*You* failed" - Always use: "*We* failed"
  Because we didn't help the person not to fail

Ignore the first reaction

- If you show something is wrong

- Even if the person agrees, first you'll get:
    "Yes, but … bla bla" or,
    "That's because … bla bla"

- We have been trained from childhood to make excuses

- Ignore the bla bla

- Let the excuse come out and wait for the next reaction

The problem of problem denial
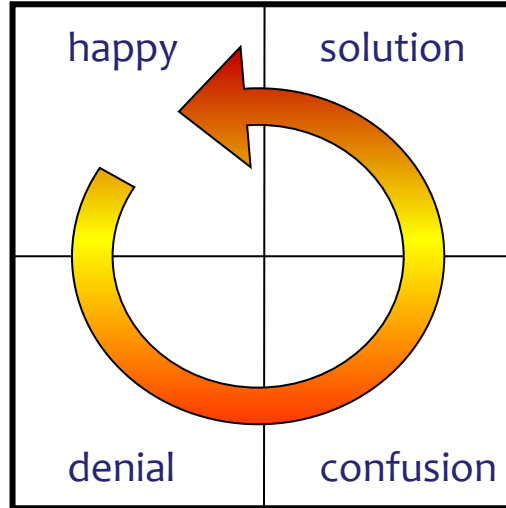
Causes of Delay

- Some typical causes of delay are:
  - Developing the wrong things
  - Unclear requirements
  - Misunderstandings
  - No feedback from stakeholders
  - No adequate planning
  - No adequate communication
  - Doing unnecessary things
  - Doing things less cleverly
  - Waiting (before and during the project)
  - Changing requirements
  - Doing things over
  - Indecisiveness
  - Suppliers
  - Quality of suppliers results
  - No Sense of Urgency
  - Hobbying
  - Political ploys
  - Boss is always right (culture)
- Excuses, excuses: it's always "them". How about "us" ?
- What are causes of these causes ? (use 5 times 'Why ?')

Causes of causes

- Management
- No Sense of Urgency
- Fear of Failure
- Ignorance
- Incompetence
- Politics
- Indifference

- Perception
- Uncertainty
- Lack of time
- Not a Zero Defects attitude
- No techniques offered
- Lack of Discipline
- Intuition

Mantra: What are we doing about it ?

Prevention: Root Cause Analysis

- Cause:
  The error that caused the problem

- Root Cause:
  What caused *us* to make the error that caused the problem

- Without proper Root Cause Analysis, we're *doomed to repeat the same problems*

Testers issues

- Being done as soon as the development is done
  - Well, almost

- Excuses, excuses, excuses
  - The developers are always late
    (What did you do to help them ?)
  - The developers don't take us seriously
    (Developers could ask testers for help)
  - The developers don't inject enough defects
    (Now testing becomes a real challenge)
  - We are the bearers of bad news
    (Find out what we really are supposed to do)
- Helping development to be successful

Mistakes, unnecessary things

- What was the last time you made a mistake ?
- What was the last time you did something unnecessary ?

- Did you talk with others about it ?
- Did you learn from it ?
- What did you do about it ?

- Case:
  - Learning 10-fold from my mistakes

The power of question

- Don't tell people what or how to do or not to do ! (I just did)
- Shouldn't we better use the question form ? (I just did)

- Just telling may create resistance
- A question invites a response
- Wouldn't a 'nice' question invite an even better response ?

Dutch: Gelijk hebben is niet genoeg, gelijk krijgen is de kunst

It's not about being right

It's about how to make it accepted as right

We could even be wrong, couldn't we ?

Some 'innocent' questions:

- Why would we do that ?
  (never use 'you')
- Who's waiting for that ?
- What do they need ?
- How much do they need ?
- When do they need it ?
- Is it really necessary ?
- How do we know ?
- Is it really necessary now ?
- Is this the best way to do it ?
- Does it fit the available time ?
- If not: What are we going to do about it ?

And a lot more

People come in with their week plan,
and come out with a modified plan,
more going to work on the right things,
and less on unnecessary things.
Immediate savings.
From day one.

filterOff	cycle:	3	hours of:	john	total:	26	Edit other:
prev	plus:	1	in cycle:	Cyc 3	done:	0	○ names ○ deliveries
next					to do:	26	○ task-cycles ○ close

⇓ tskCyc	cycDue	⇓ name	hrs	ok	⇓ description
Cyc 3	2024-10-04	john	3		task description 9
Cyc 3	2024-10-04	john	4		task description 8
Cyc 3	2024-10-04	john	3		task description 7
Cyc 3	2024-10-04	john	5		task description 6
Cyc 3	2024-10-04	john	8		task description 5
Cyc 3	2024-10-04	john	3		task description 4

Avoiding 'you'

- Why did you do it wrong ?
- What did we do wrong ?

- What are you going to do about it ?
- What are we going to do about it?

- What could and should we do about it ?
- In case of a blank face, perhaps 'suggest', to trigger the imagination:
  - Would xxx perhaps work ?
  - How about trying xxx ?

Culture

- Culture: Ingrained customs
  - Things we learn by mimicking what we experience around us
  - Language
  - Social behavior
  - Faith, religion
  - Folklore
  - Doing what we're used to
  - We don't really know why we do it, or even that we do it; we just do it
  - Experience → intuition → culture
  - Not genetic (that would be instinct)

- Once we see other cultures, we can see that our own culture isn't obvious at all; neither is theirs

- Still we judge others through our own cultural spectacles, whether we like it or not

Culture

- We have to change the culture

- Culture can change

- Don't start at the wrong end

Cultural differences affecting our success ?

Dutch	Japanese ?
• open, direct, explicit, blunt	• …
• informal	• …
• preaching	• … ?
• assertive	
• can say no	
• egalitarian, not showing wealth	
• little power distance	
• authority must be earned	
• little brand value	
• not spending more than necessary	
• consensus	
• win-win	

Cultural behaviour

- Case:
  Can you say "No" ?

- Case:
  Outsourcing to a development team in Minsk
  - Behaviour of the project team
  - How we expected the project team to behave

People oppose change !

- Right ?

- People are not against change
  People (sub-consciously) don't like uncertainty

- Our work changes something, hence introduces uncertainty

- People can cope with uncertainty for a short time

We failed because of politics

- Good politics:
  - People decide differently based on different beliefs

- Bad politics: hidden agenda's
  - Say this, mean that - often even unintentionally
  - Politics thrive by vagueness
  - Facts can make bad politics loose ground

- If we accepted the responsibility, failure because of "politics" is just another excuse

- What did we really do about it ?
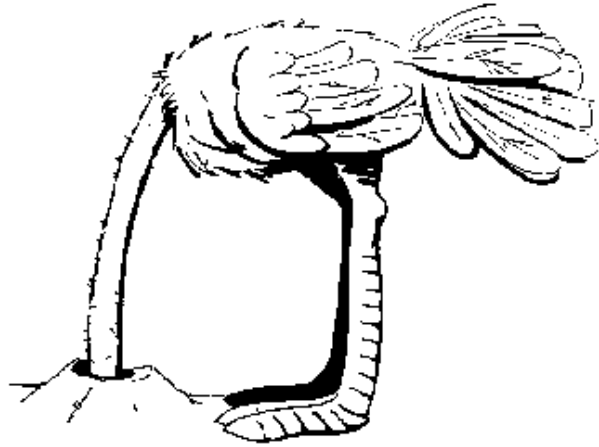
Our problems are not the real problem,
the real problem is that we don't do something about it

Every day we see a problem earlier,
we have a day more to do something about it

Accept Human Psychology

- **Why don't they practice what we preach ?**
  (Humphrey 1999)

- **They don't practice what we preach !**

  What now?

Conclusion

- We've seen several elements of human behaviour

with

- Recognizing and understanding behaviour is the start of doing something ~~about~~ it

- Why don't they practice what we preach ?
  (Humphrey 1999)

- They don't practice what we preach !

  What now?

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